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AUTHOR Grafton, Clive L.; Boland, Paul A.
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ABSTRACT

During December 1977, 56 community college counselors, representing 21 institutions and attending the annual Counselor's Day program sponsored by the University of Southern California (USC) Office of Admissions, participated in a survey on their professional development needs. Of respondents, 31 were men and and 25 women; 46 held master's degrees and 9 doctorates. Approximately 57% had been in community colleges less than six years and held counseling positions for six years or less. In addition to counselor characteristics, the survey instrument elicited information on the most acceptable approaches to professional development, counselors' rankings of counseling and college course areas by importance to personal professional development needs, what development areas should be included in a possible "certificate" program; and additional course and program topics of interest. Results indicated counselors were particularly interested in short-term courses, weekend seminars, and degree programs to improve their competencies and provide needed information in areas such as vocational development, nontraditional students, counseling, student development, and evaluation techniques. Most counselors said they would select USC for professional development needs because of its curriculum, program, prestige, and faculty, but would be deterred largely by cost and distance from their campuses. (Author/TE)

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# STAFF DEVELOPMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

# REPORT OF A SURVEY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE COUNSELORS

by

Clive L. Grafton
Department of Higher and Postsecondary Education
University of Southern California

and

Paul A. Bloland
Department of Counseling
University of Southern California

JC 780 408

STAFF DEVELOPMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT
REPORT OF A SURVEY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE COUNSELORS

Introduction. As a part of the annual Counselor's Day program sponsored by the University of Southern California Office of Admissions, an arrangement was made by two departments of the School of Education (Department of Counseling, Department of Higher and Postsecondary Education) to meet with and to survey community college counselor participants. The program was conducted on December 13, 1977 under the direction of Paul A. Bloland and Clive L. Grafton, of the two Departments.

The brief program involved (a) an outline of certain events surrounding staff development interest at the state level for community colleges, (b) a presentation on various means of establishing staff development programs, and (c) a request to complete a survey instrument. The results of that survey follow.

The Sample. A section of the instrument requested some general information. Fifty-six community college counselors, representing 21 institutions, completed the survey. Of the 56, 31 (55.4 percent) were men, 25 (44.6 percent) were women. The majority held Master's degree (82.1 percent). A complete breakdown is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Community College Counselor Sample, Shown by Sex and Degrees Held

| | Bachelor's | Master's | Doctorate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Men (N=31) | - | 24[a] | 7 |
| Women (N=25) | 1 | 22 | 2 |
| Totals (N=56) | 1 | 46 | 9 |

[a]Included 3 respondents who indicated that they were currently enrolled in a doctoral program.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the number of years in which they had been employed by community colleges and the number of years in which they had been community college counselors. Over one-half of the sample (57.1 percent) had been in community colleges less than six years, with (57.1 percent) holding counseling positions for six years or less. Table 2 shows years of service for selected ranges. It was interesting to note that 40 respondents indicated that their years in the community college movement and service as a counselor were identical, nearly three-fourths of the sample (71.4 percent).

Table 2

Community College Sample, Shown by Sex, Number of Years of Community Colleges and Number of Years as Community College Counselors

| | Number of Years in Community College | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0-3 | 4-6 | 7-10 | 11-15 | 16+ |
| Men (N=31) | 6 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| Women (N=25) | 8 | 11 | 3 | 1 | 0 |

| | Number of Years as Community College Counselor | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0-3 | 4-6 | 7-10 | 11-15 | 16+ |
| Men (N=31) | 6 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 5 |
| Women (N=25) | 12 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 0 |

## THE SURVEY

The first question asked: Based upon some type of mandated professional development program, which of the listed approaches are perceived as being most acceptable for community college counselors. Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3

Community College Counselor Responses to Presentation Types Most Acceptable, Shown in Rank Order of First Choice[a]

| | Respondent Rankings | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Short-term courses | 22 | 13 | 8 | 4 | 0 |
| Weekend seminars | 14 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| Degree programs | 12 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 17 |
| Day or evening all-day lectures | 9 | 7 | 6 | 13 | 8 |
| Course work in which a certificate could be earned | 8 | 7 | 11 | 9 | 5 |

[a]Respondents were asked to rank each approach type as a first, second, third, fourth, or fifth choice.

Respondents were then asked to rank areas of interest in both counseling and community college course areas that would be of greatest importance to their personal professional development needs. Table 4 presents these data with items ranked according to number of times the item was ranked as one of the first five choices.

Table 4

Community College Counselor Responses to Areas of Interest in Counseling and Community College Course Areas Perceived to be of Greatest Importance in Professional Development

| | Rank Order of Selection | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Composite Rank | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 1. Career education | 14 | 12 | 1 | 3 | 4 | - | 8 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Student development | 12 | 2 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | - | - | 1 |
| 3. Vocational/placement counseling | 9 | 10 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 9 | - | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - |
| 4. The adult learner | 8 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 5. Counseling theory and practice | 15 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 6. Evaluation of programs and services | 4 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | - |
| 7. Community College Curriculum | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| 8. General principles of student personnel work | 7 | - | 3 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 1 | - |
| 9. Psychological testing/measurement | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 7 |
| 10. General principles of the community college | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 | - | 4 | 8 | 5 | 1 |
| 11. Management of student personnel services | 2 | 5 | 2 | - | 5 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 4 | - |
| 12. Community College administration | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 9 |

One respondent included "assessing community needs and community populations, "which was added to the area of evaluation of program and services."

Related to Table 4, but asking the question in a somewhat different context, respondents were asked to note four areas in which professional development work would be most important if a "certificate" program was to be developed. Although the ranking was not exactly the same, the first five areas of importance underlined a desire to include work in (1) career education, (2) vocational/placement counseling, (3) student development and the adult learners, (4) counseling theory and practice and (5) evaluation of programs and services. (See Table 5).

Table 5

Community College Counselor Responses to Indicating Four Areas of Most Importance to Development of a Certificate Program

| Rank | Item | Number of Times Checked |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Career education | 37 |
| 2 | Vocational/placement counseling | 27 |
| 3 | Student development | 25 |
| 3 | The adult learner | 25 |
| 5 | Counseling theory and practice | 22 |
| 6 | Evaluation of programs and services | 17 |
| 7 | Community college curriculum | 13 |
| 7 | Psychological testing/measurement | 13 |
| 9 | General principles of student personnel work | 11 |
| 10 | General principles of the community college | 10 |
| 10 | Management of student personnel services | 10 |
| 10 | Community college administration | 10 |

Respondents were then asked to list any additional courses of interest, not listed in the previous question, that they would desire to have a part of a professional development program. The counselors listed 41 course titles. These titles were then categorized into broad subject areas. Not all of the course titles readily fit into each category, but most often mentioned were

counseling techniques (use of diagnostic tools, group counseling, interviewing, use of media in counseling, professional ethics, etc.). The second broad category was in special student needs (issues of human development, specialized areas of student development, personal growth, bi-lingual/crosscultural needs, etc.). A third category was the non-traditional student (older adult, handicapped, re-entry women, etc.), with a fourth category involving administrative or general field suggestions (collective bargaining, articulation problems, etc.). Table 6 summarizes these data.

Table 6

Community College Counselor Responses to Courses That Additionally should be a Part of a Professional Development Program

| General Category | Number of Times Mentioned |
|---|---|
| 1. Counseling technique | 14 |
| 2. Specialized student needs | 12 |
| 3. Related to non-traditional students | 8 |
| 4. Administrative/general field | 7 |

The counselors were also asked to list any program topics that might be part of a professional development program, if requirements were to be met by short-term fulfillment (i.e., short-term courses, weekend seminars, day or evening meetings, etc.). All-in-all, different programs were suggested. An attempt was then made to categorize the programs into broad categories, and these data are reported in Table 7. A variety of suggestions involving counseling techniques led the responses, with human and student development programs following. Programs related to non-traditional students and career/vocational development were tied for third, with general administrative topics last.

Table 7

Community College Counselor Responses to Specific Program Suggestions for Professional Development Requirements Based On Short-Term Fulfillment

| Broad Categories with Specific Examples | N Times Mentioned |
|---|---|
| 1. Counseling Techniques (psychological counseling, testing, crisis counseling, therapy case studies, group counseling, etc.) | 22 |
| 2. Human and Student Development (self-esteem, values clarifications, motivation, decision-making, later life, etc.) | 17 |
| 3. Non-traditional students (minorities, women, handicapped, adult learner, etc.) | 13 |
| 3. Career/Vocational Development (career education, employment trends, vocational planning, etc.) | 13 |
| 4. General Administrative (management skills, cost effectiveness, collective bargaining, articulation, etc.) | 12 |

Finally, counselors were asked to indicate one or two reasons why USC might be selected as a place to meet professional development needs, also indicating reasons why USC might not be selected.

Programs, curriculum, and prestige of the School of Education and University were most often cited. Location, faculty, and general facilities were also listed as positive items (see Table 8).

Negative reasons centered on educational costs and travel distances. It is of particular interest that all respondents listed some positive aspect, whereas, 13 respondents did not note anything negative (see Table 9).

Table 8

Community College Counselor Responses To Factors That Would Encourage Them To Select USC As A Place To Meet Professional Development Needs

| Positive Categories | Number of Times Cited[a] |
|---|---|
| Curriculum and Programs | 17 |
| Prestige and Status of School and University | 16 |
| Location | 13 |
| Faculty | 11 |
| Facilities | 4 |
| Total | 77 |

[a]Multiple responses were possible.

Table 9

Community College Counselor Responses To Factors That Would Discourage Them From Selecting USC for Professional Development Needs

| Negative Factors | Number of Times Cited[a] |
|---|---|
| Costs | 36 |
| Travel distance | 18 |
| Congestion/bigness | 3 |
| Single answers not categorized: | 3 |
| Curriculum too broad | |
| Inflexible scheduling | |
| Would not be fair to Notre Dame | |
| Total | 57 |

[a]Multiple responses were possible.

In summary, 56 community college counselors, representing 21 different institutions, were surveyed about their professional development needs on December 13, 1977. It appeared from the survey results that they were particularly interested in short-term courses, weekend seminars, and degree programs which would improve their competencies and provide needed information in such areas as vocational development (career education, vocational counseling, etc.), non-traditional students (adults, minorities, the handicapped, etc.), counseling (counseling theory and practice, vocational counseling, etc.), student development (developmental groups, programming and service), and evaluation techniques (evolution of programs and services, psychological testing and measurement, etc.). They would select USC for their professional development needs because of its curriculum and program, its prestige, its location, and its faculty, but would be deterred largely by its cost and to a lesser extent by its distance from their campuses.

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